STAR WARS
REBELLION

“STRIKE FORCE: SHANTIPOLE”

Story

by

Steve Gilbert, Michael Kirkbride, & Ken Rolston

Teleplay

By

Michael Kirkbride

©2000
All Rights Reserved

STAR WARS: REBELLION
"STRIKE FORCE: SHANTIPOLE"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE – UNKNOWN SECTOR

STILLSHOT of the stars, which suddenly DISTORTS into:

INT. X-WING (RED-2) COCKPIT POV

The cockpit raises INTO VIEW. RED-2 is near the back of an X-Wing formation, facing the same stars.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Okay, Bre. You're proxy on Red-2.

ENDIGO (V.O.)
I'm Red-5, I think.

RED-2 (V.O.)
(distorted)
Red Leader, we are primed and ready to jump to--

BRE (V.O.)
I'm Red who? Getting static here.

DISTORT TO:

INT. X-WING (RED-3) COCKPIT POV

Red-3 is in front of Red-2.

FOLLOWING PILOT'S POV as he looks around at his other wingmates.

RED-3 (V.O.)
(distorted)
Red-2, I’m reading unequal emission pulses from your left port engine. Have your astro--

NUNI (V.O.)
Red-3 proxy’s fine, Hulda, but audio’s still--

RED LEADER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Form up. Opiuchi on my mark.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Bre, you’re Red-2. Audio should be better now, Nuni. Check?

RED-2 (V.O.)
Artoo unit says I’m clean, Red Leader.

NUNI (V.O.)
Check, Hulda. Clear enough.

RED LEADER (V.O.)
Mark.

DISTORT TO:

INT. X-WING (RED LEADER) COCKPIT POV

Red Leader is at the front of the pack.

A KEENING SOUND IS HEARD as the stars outside stretch into glowing lines.

The X-Wings jump into the BLUE-WHITE CORRIDOR of hyperspace.

RED-5 (V.O.)
(distorted)
How close are we dropping, Red Leader?

RED LEADER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Close enough for all shields double front.

BRE (V.O.)
Getting distortion again.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Naw, Bre, that’s just residual noise from their hyperspace radios. Skats, you’re Red Leader.

SKATUHL (V.O.)
S’slek.

ENDIGO (V.O.)
The inertial dampeners on this proxy program are making me sick, Hulda. Dial my tactile up.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Negative, Shen. You get dusted first.

BRE (V.O.)
What, does it hurt?

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Shh. You’re about to fall out.

RED LEADER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Go in five. Four. Three. Two.

Realspace SNAPS back and the X-Wings are somewhere in the Opiuchi system, near a bright blue-purple nebula.

RED-2 (V.O.)
On scope.

RED LEADER (V.O.)
Go.

DISTORT TO:

INT. X-WING (RED-5) COCKPIT POV

Red Leader’s X-Wing banks hard, the rest of his wing following suit. Edging out of the nebula is an Imperial supply convoy, three Bulk Cruisers and a TIE Fighter escort. The Imperial starfighters immediately begin to engage.

RED-5 (V.O.)
I count eight fighters.

RED LEADER (V.O.)
Lock S-Foils into attack position. Find a favorite and take it out.

Red-2 dives in front of Red-5 and opens fire on a pair of TIEs, fracturing them both apart. They EXPLODE. Red-5 LOOKS DOWN to his targeting computer and lines up a shot.

BRE (V.O.)
Wow. My guy’s good.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
You’re all good. That’s the problem.

Red-5 LOOKS BACK UP and fires on a TIE Fighter. His POV LOOPS AROUND to avoid incoming laserfire. The TIE EXPLODES.

RED LEADER (V.O.)
Red-2 and 3, split your distance and get an ion firing arc on that first bulk cruiser.

DISTORT TO:

EXT. SPACE – OPIUCHI SYSTEM – SPACE BATTLE

TRAILING AWAY from Red Leader’s X-Wing to see the space battle TUMBLE INTO VIEW.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Ahh, finally my own visual. Red-5, you just launched a combat camera.

RED-2 (V.O.)
Roger that, Commander Spralt.

BRE (V.O.)
Damn. Wish they didn’t use names.

Red-2 and Red-3 begin to ionize the first Bulk Cruiser.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Here it comes.

Two Nebulon-B Frigates fall out of hyperspace into the fray. TIE Fighters pour out of their hangars as the frigates open fire. Red-5 EXPLODES. Red-3 EXPLODES.

NUNI (V.O.)
I want out, Hulda.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Warned you. You and Shen will ride with Bre now.

DISTORT TO:

INT. X-WING (RED-2) COCKPIT POV

FOLLOW RED-2's POV as the X-Wing veers in between two of the Bulk Cruisers, laserfire trailing all around it. A LOUD CRACK IS HEARD as the X-Wing takes a hit.

RED LEADER (V.O.)
Red-2, get away from those Nebulon-B's.

NUNI (V.O.)
No, Hulda, that was too weird. Get me out completely.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
No problem, Nuni. Sorry. Let's just stop right here. The rest you can pretty much guess.

Red-2 loops around to see Red Leader EXPLODE. FREEZE.

INT. STAR DESTROYER *ATONEMENT* – SIMULATOR BAY

Hulda is standing on a vidscreen podium in the middle of a ring of sleek gray simulator pods. He flips a few switches and the pod canopies HISS open. Bre, Endigo, Skatuhl, Nuni, and UBE TONNIT, a Bith veteran of *The Long Haul*, slowly emerge from the pods.

(Note: Ube Tonnit, the Bith, is the same species as the Cantina Band Members of *A New Hope*.)

Nuni tries to shake the strange feelings of simulated death out of her head. Endigo grabs her by the shoulder and squeezes. She looks up and tries to smile.

HULDA CAULP (CONT'D)
That's why inertial dampeners.

NUNI
I'll be fine. But I'm still not sure why we had to look, though.

ENDIGO
I wanted to see it. It's the only Nebulon raid we've captured on tape.

HULDA CAULP
Hear it's better when it's not proxy and you just run simulation scenarios.

BRE
Then we control it, huh?

A TRILLING SOUND comes over the destroyer's loudspeakers.

DESTRI (V.O.)
Subsection eighteen, everyone. Mon Mothma is here to brief us herself.

INT. STAR DESTROYER *ATONEMENT* - BRIEFING ROOM

Admiral Mede, Captain Destri, Hulda, Two-Tau, Bre, Endigo, his crew, and other Rebel Officers watch the circular holoprojector table activate itself. MON MOTHMA, leader of the Rebel Alliance, tall, auburn-haired, regal, handsome, and world-weary, FLICKERS into life. She surveys the room and smiles, somewhat grimly. She nods to Admiral Mede. An image of a Nebulon-B Frigate appears beside her.

MON MOTHMA
Hello, my friends. This must be brief. At 194 million standard credits, the Nebulon-B Frigate costs less than one twentieth of the price of an *Imperial*-class Star Destroyer.

The image of the Nebulon-B multiplies itself, each duplicate shrinking into a different quadrant of an emerging galactic map.

MON MOTHMA (CONT'D)
The Emperor has increased production of these vessels at an alarming rate. Since their deployment, damage to our raiding parties has climbed so dramatically that Alliance High Command has discontinued all attacks on Imperial convoys. Without these raids, Rebel supplies have become dangerously low. Already, we have lost the ability to support many of our outlying cells. Soon, it will be hard to mount any rebellion at all.

A section of the galactic map grows to show an asteroid field. Portions of the asteroid field HIGHLIGHT.

MON MOTHMA (CONT'D)
But all is not lost. A team of Alliance engineers, led by Commander Ackbar, has developed a plan to counter these deadly escort frigates. His team, currently hidden in the Roche Asteroid Field, is working on an experimental starfighter, the B-Wing Bomber. I cannot go into more specifics, Admiral Mede, for security reasons. Transmitted to this holo-disk--

An oval brass disk POPS out of a module on the holoprojector.

MON MOTHMA (CONT'D)
--are the necessary coordinates to reach Research Station Shantipole in the Roche Field, clearance codes to contact the Command Base, and a personal message from myself to Commander Ackbar. You must assemble a team to deliver this message safely to Shantipole, Admiral Mede. Further instructions will await your team there.

Mon Mothma FLICKERS out. General Madine FLICKERS in.

MADINE
You take over from here, Mede. The Roche Field is very old, and it's rather orderly. Its asteroids follow an almost predictable elliptical pattern around the system's star, but "almost" should be enough warning to you that taking the *Atonement* in there would be a bad idea.

DESTRI
We'll use the *Refugee-One*. She's large, but she's quick.

MEDE
Mr. Endigo, gather your team. The *Atonement* will get you as near to--

MADINE
Actually, Admiral, we need the *Atonement* somewhere else. If we can't hit an Imperial convoy with something small, we'll hit it with something like you. The Shantipole team will be on its own.

Endigo looks at the others. He doesn't seem happy about this. Mede notices his concern.

MEDE
Very well, General. Beam me that operation profile while we prepare for our primary mission. Mede out.

The General nods. Endigo motions to Bre and Hulda. Madine FLICKERS out. Mede looks over to Endigo.

MEDE (CONT'D)
Is there a problem, Mr. Endigo?

ENDIGO
None at all. Simple courier job, right? Deliver super secret message to Ackbar.

MEDE
Are you taking Officer Bre to pilot the *Refugee-One*?

ENDIGO
She knows it best, other than the Captain. Townowi ship.

MEDE
Very good.

Mede starts to exit.

ENDIGO
Of course, there's the "await further instructions" thing.

MEDE
Say what you mean, Mr. Endigo.

ENDIGO
Say what? You do your mission, I'll do mine.

MEDE
I admit, I don't know where all of this is coming from.

ENDIGO
Fine. I sense a disturbance in the Force.

MEDE
I am not sure what that means, either.

ENDIGO
There you go, then. Don't worry about it. Something bad is going to happen, the Alliance knows about it, and we'll have to deal with it without you.

MEDE
I assume you cannot prove that High Command knows about this.

ENDIGO
No. I can't prove something bad will happen either. It's just a hunch. I get them once in awhile. Got it off Mothma and Madine there. Forget it.

MEDE
I will. We cannot fight a war based on your feelings, Mr. Endigo.

The Admiral exits. Destri follows. Endigo looks rather sheepish until he notices that Hulda, Bre, and Nuni are looking at him. He manages a smile and then motions for them to follow him.

ENDIGO
Let's get to the hangar and get her primed. Bre, Nuni's your co-pilot. Hulda, grab the usual crew.

Endigo snaps up the holo-disk and tosses it over his shoulder to Hulda as he exits.

EXT. SPACE – UNKNOWN SECTOR – ON THE *REFUGEE-ONE*

as the Townowi vessel falls from the ISD *Atonement*'s pincer clamps, turning on its lateral thrusters into a hyperlane vector. The *Refugee-One* enters lightspeed and vanishes FROM VIEW.

INT. STAR DESTROYER *ATONEMENT* – BRIDGE

Mede is standing near the viewports, frowning absently. Captain Destri enters as Bridge Officers prepare for the *Atonement*'s own jump into hyperspace.

DESTRI
Shen still bothering you, sir?

MEDE
What? No. I never worry about him.

Captain Destri, anticipating an awkward silence, decides to check on the communications relay. Mede turns back to her.

MEDE (CONT'D)
I... forget sometimes that you are not Veeja.

Destri stops. She doesn't know what to make of that.

MEDE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. What I mean to say is that Veeja would know Captain Jelser.

DESTRI
Head of the supply convoy we're hitting? Friend of yours?

MEDE
A colleague. A fine man. Courageous. Two sons, graduates from the Academy.

Mede turns back to the viewport.

MEDE (CONT'D)
They will miss him.

Destri bites her lower lip and backs away, bumping into a Bridge Officer, who raises an apologetic hand. She exits.

EXT. SPACE – UNKNOWN SECTOR

The *Atonement* shifts position, dropping its garbage, junk metal husks and spent energy cells, into the void. It zooms into hyperspace and OUT OF VIEW.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE – NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

The *Refugee-One* drops from hyperspace far from the asteroid field. Roche is beautiful and immense, a multicolored multitude, backlit rocks and planetoids surrounding a dying star whose periphery is a swirl of bright spiral vapors.

INT. *REFUGEE-ONE* - BRIDGE

Bre and Nuni are seated in flight chairs, command consoles before them. Hulda and Ube Tonnit are looking over the tactical grid, where a red light FLASHES. Endigo enters.

HULDA CAULP
Alliance signal receiver.

BRE
Closing in on their base-homing broadcast on a slave node. Bringing up the full-spectrum transceiver now.

NUNI
Origin's out about an hour. Sending our clearance code for authorization.

BRE
(admiring the view)
Pretty.

ENDIGO
Hope you like bugs.

Endigo exits. Nuni looks over to Bre and explains.

NUNI
Skip's talking about the Verpine. Their entire race lives in this asteroid field. Insectoids. Kinda creepy hive mind thing going on upstairs, but, well, you know. We've been here before.

HULDA CAULP
Good engineers, though. They can think <u>sideways</u>. No wonder Ackbar is out here.

Ube Tonnit points out the BLIPS on the tactical grid just as the ALERT SOUNDS.

BRE
Imperial fighters.

ENDIGO (V.O.)
Recons. Hulda.

HULDA CAULP
I know. Recons means something bigger is lurking. Looking for it now.

EXT. SPACE – NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

The *Refugee-One* speeds towards the nearest asteroid, its lasers taking a few shots at a wing of three TIE Fighters.

NUNI (V.O.)
They're hanging back. Scanning us.

ENDIGO (V.O.)
Let them. Our net's coming.

Behind the TIEs, three X-Wings fall out of hyperspace.

One Imperial fighter is vaporized into SPARKLING FRAGMENTS as the other two speed away.

ON BOJ, a horned, fierce-looking Gotal, as his X-Wing swings behind a TIE Fighter and opens fire.

BOJ
Want one left to run? Maybe track it--

ENDIGO (V.O.)
No way.

BOJ
Me neither.

Boj fires again and the TIE Fighter EXPLODES.

PULL BACK as the other two X-Wings converge on the final TIE and rip it apart.

ENDIGO (V.O.)
Good work. Dock up.
(beat)
Hulda?

INT. *REFUGEE-ONE* – BRIDGE

Hulda flips a switch near the tactical grid.

HULDA CAULP
Something's out there, Shen, but it's jamming us. Doing likewise after I alert Shantipole.

BRE
I sense a disturbance in the Force.

Nuni smiles and steers the *Refugee-One* through a cluster of twirling asteroids.

HULDA CAULP
We've got confirmation from the Shantipole Command Base. They're transmitting a safe flight path now.

BRE
Roger that.

An overlay HIGHLIGHTS across the *Refugee-One*'s viewport, centering on a crosshair guide that dips and rises, lines shooting out from it to point out unstable asteroids.

NUNI
Tidy.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD – SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE

Project Shantipole takes up two asteroids, the Command Base and the Research Station. Only the Command Base is IN VIEW.

The Command Base is an hourglass-shaped chunk of rock, points of light penetrating the asteroid's outer crust to highlight air vents and repulsor-beam projectors.

The *Refugee-One* circles around the spinning Command Base, coming to an opening in the asteroid's side, a hangar bay, several figures moving about within its lighted interior.

INT. *REFUGEE-ONE* – BRIDGE

Bre flips a switch on her command console and a communications monitor folds down from the *Refugee-One*'s ceiling.

SUSKAFOO appears, a Verpine: tall, thin, pale-green, its joints awkwardly articulated, its face a ridged, plated mouth and dark, featureless eyes.

Suskafoo's antennae twitch animatedly as its voice, CHIRPING and CLICKING but cheerful, comes over the comlink.

SUSKAFOO
Welcome, units of the Rebel Hive. I am Suskafoo. Landing could be tricky. Allow for our rotation. What kind of ship is that?

BRE
Um. Townowi.

SUSKAFOO
(cocking its head)
And I thought I had mastered Galactic Basic quickly.

Suskafoo FLICKERS off the monitor. Bre turns to Nuni, who shrugs. They carefully maneuver the *Refugee-One* into the hangar bay of the Command Base, a tight fit.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – HANGAR BAY

The small hangar bay appears functional and efficient, apparently carved and hollowed out of the natural rock of the asteroid. A mixture of instrument panels, cooling veins, and patches of reddish-brown stone cover the bay walls. A metal control tower juts out over the hangar deck. The *Refugee-One* barely misses an impact with it, coming to rest uneasily on the hangar floor.

A wide stone passage leads out of the chamber. Suskafoo and several other Verpine enter to greet the newcomers. The Verpine come in three distinct colors of green: pale, like Suskafoo, nearly white, and iridescent beetle-black.

Suskafoo and three of the pale Verpine look over the ship, cocking their heads and CHIRPING. One of the beetle-black Verpine CLAMPS over mechanically, revealing that it is, in fact, a droid Servitor. It shakes its head at Suskafoo, pointing at the *Refugee-One*'s port valve.

SUSKAFOO
Yes, well, I suppose that would cause a thermoblast. Forget I ever suggested it. ‘Townowi’ must mean broken.

The landing ramp of the *Refugee-One* opens. Endigo, Hulda, Bre, Two-Tau, Ube Tonnit, Boj, Skatuhl, and DACON JIX, a large, tusked Whiphid, debark the vessel, all carrying blasters at the ready. Two-Tau follows. The pale Verpine closest to the Combat Droid immediately scurry over, twitching excitedly. Two-Tau pushes one out of his way with a handcannon arm.

The bone white Verpine hang back, oblivious.

ENDIGO
(to Bre)
Those are drones.
(motioning to the approaching Suskafoo)
They fall off these guys all the time.

BRE
Nice.

SUSKAFOO
Welcome. My units would like to open your hatches.

BRE
...what..?

ENDIGO
Back off. Just tell us where Ackbar is.

SUSKAFOO
(ignoring Endigo)
Your power system is crowded in redundant energy couplers. My hive could very easily--

SALIN GLEK enters. Glek is a squid-faced Quarren, his Alliance uniform obscured by a long brown cloak. Beside him is POLLARD, a rough-looking human wearing battlefield armor, a blaster rifle slung over his padded shoulder. Pollard’s left arm is cybernetic.

Glek focuses his attention on Suskafoo and utters three SHARP SOUNDS. The Verpine CHIRPS an angry reply, waves its antennae at Bre and Endigo, and then quickly exits the chamber. The other Verpine fall reluctantly behind.

SALIN GLEK
(to Endigo)
Greetings, I am Lieutenant Salin Glek, aide to Commander Ackbar. I trust you have a prime reason for jeopardizing the security of this base?

Hulda lifts the brass holo-disk.

ENDIGO
Communiqué from High Command. Take it up with them.

Endigo raises a hand to his transceiver ear.

ENDIGO (CONT'D)
Nuni, watch the ship.

NUNI (V.O.)
Here when you need me.

Glek reaches for the holo-disk, but Endigo grabs his arm quickly. The Quarren's facial tentacles flare. Pollard levels his blaster rifle. Skatuhl GROWLS.

POLLARD
Hey, Skats. Endigo.

ENDIGO
Pollard.

SALIN GLEK
The Commander is busy finalizing the prototype inspections. Coupled with your reports that we have Imperials about, I must insist--

ENDIGO
You do that.
(to Pollard)
Where is he?

POLLARD
Follow me. Lieutenant Glek, I can vouch for Shen Endigo here. Hey, Hulda.

HULDA CAULP
Hey, Pol. Still sorry you left us.

POLLARD
That's not how I remember it.
(lifts his cyborged arm)
I've got that phantom arm phenomenon again. Weird feeling: two at once. You still get that, too, Skipper?

ENDIGO
Don't remind me why I did it, Pollard.

Pollard begins to lead the group out of the hangar. Salin Glek follows along, quiet and sullen. The stone passage beyond is covered with monitors and control panels. As each member of the group passes by one of the monitors they appear in vector outline onscreen, their weapons HIGHLIGHTED, PINGS signaling multiple detections.

All exit. Suskafoo and three of its pale friends return, look around, and quickly go to inspect the *Refugee-One* again.

EXT. SPACE – NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

A Nebulon-B Frigate, the *Grenadier*, drifts on the outskirts of the asteroids, patches of its hull catching swaths of bright reds and oranges from the dying sun at the field's core.

INT. NEBULON-B FRIGATE *GRENADIER* – BRIDGE

DISTRICT COMMANDER BANE NOTHOS, heavy-set and sporting antiquated mutton-chops, looks out into the Roche field. His FRIGATE OFFICER enters.

FRIGATE OFFICER
Still no contact from our long-range recon patrols, Commander Nothos. Shall I send another wing to investigate?

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
No. We'll have our signal from our Shantipole operative soon. His last transmission confirmed that the prototypes were nearing completion. We will move then.

FRIGATE OFFICER
Our stormtroopers are already in their assault shuttles, sir. On your command.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
Keep them eager. Show them the tapes of our Dathomir victory again. They love that one.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – COMMAND CENTER

COMMANDER ACKBAR, an august Mon Calamari, looks over a holoprojector tank that fills the floor space of a large circular chamber. Hunched over the display terminal are two young Verpine and a cluster of white drones.

Pollard and the rest of the Shantipole team enter.

POLLARD
Commander Ackbar. These are the messengers.

Ackbar bows to Endigo and his team. An image of the B-Wing prototype hovers over the holoprojector, morphing itself into different configurations. The two Verpine CHIRP in delight with each new iteration.

ACKBAR
Welcome to our base. I understand you traveled a great distance to see me. I trust your journey--

SALIN GLEK
An Imperial patrol attacked them as soon as they fell out of lightspeed, Commander. A heat signature wake from their craft could easily be tracked--

HULDA CAULP
We modified our trail with proton flares, Commander. We're ghosts by now.

SALIN GLEK
Still, I must express considerable concern about this matter.

Bre rolls her eyes and goes to study the B-Wing hologram. The two Verpine begin to point out its features with their antennae. Bre smiles and nods for the sake of it.

POLLARD
Commander Ackbar, our sensors indicate we are safe for the time being. Endigo and his team are very resourceful.

ACKBAR
Thank you, Lieutenant Pollard. I trust your judgment.
(to Endigo)
Let's see what you've brought, my friends.

Hulda places the holo-disk into the projector. Immediately the B-Wing WINKS OUT, replaced by the bluish form of Mon Mothma. Ackbar and the rest of the Rebels spread out to hear her. The Verpine lose interest and exit.

MON MOTHMA
Greetings, old friend. As you predicted, the Nebulon-B escort frigate has put an end to our supply raids. Your report that the Shantipole Project nears completion could not have come at a better time. The rest of this message is for your eyes only, Commander Ackbar, and for the agents who delivered it to you. Please pause the holo-disk until all other personnel have left the area.

Ackbar reaches out, tapping controls on the projector tank. Mon Mothma's form freezes. Salin Glek takes his leave immediately.

Pollard stays where he is.

ENDIGO
Out.

Ackbar nods his head and motions for Lieutenant Pollard to leave. Pollard exits. The Commander waits a moment, then taps the controls on the holoprojector again.

MON MOTHMA
An Alliance fleet is assembling in the Pothor system. Proceed there immediately with your design team and your two prototype B-Wings. Upon arrival you will assume the rank of Admiral. Your first duty is to organize a mass production system for your new starfighter. To the agents who delivered this disk: Thank you for your service; the Alliance owes you a great debt. I must now ask you to perform another service for us.

Endigo looks at Hulda, who purses his lips. Bre notices the exchange and looks over to Skatuhl. The Barabel's expression is inscrutable.

MON MOTHMA (CONT'D)
You must safeguard Commander Ackbar, escorting him and his project to the rendezvous point; the location codes are embedded at the end of this holo-disk. Do not take this duty lightly: our intelligence suspects that there is an Imperial informer on the Commander's staff. To Commander Ackbar: Allow these agents to bring you, your team, and the prototypes to the rendezvous point. Trust them as I do. I apologize for the heavy-handed precautions, but we could not risk interception of this message. The B-Wing is too crucial to the survival of the Rebellion. Proceed to the rendezvous point with all speed, and may the Force be with you.

Hyperspace jump coordinates replace Mon Mothma's image.

ACKBAR
I will need time to gather my design team together.

ENDIGO
Bre, help the Commander. Hulda--

HULDA CAULP
Pollard, huh?

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – HANGAR BAY

Salin Glek ascends the ramp of the *Refugee-One.* Suskafoo and the other Verpine are nowhere in sight.

INT. *REFUGEE-ONE* – BRIDGE

Nuni watches the Verpine look over the bridge with amusement. Suskafoo marvels at the ship's interior. A Verpine studies a command console and then starts to pull it apart.

Glek enters.

NUNI
Hey, come on.

SUSKAFOO
Trust us. It needs to be fixed.

SALIN GLEK
Suskafoo! Stop this immediately. This vessel has nothing to do with the project.

SUSKAFOO
I know. Townowi is a planet.

NUNI
(to Glek)
It's all right. I've dealt with the Verpine before, sir. Give them enough time and they'll fly this thing better than--

Glek pulls a pistol from his robe and BLASTS Nuni. She falls back into a flight chair, her chest armor smoking, her head falling to the side. The Verpine duck down, quivering, CLICKING their mandibles. Glek BLASTS Nuni again. She and the flight chair CRASH back into the command console, bouncing from it to the floor. Glek reaches over and closes the *Refugee-One*'s landing ramp.

SALIN GLEK
I already know you've had enough time, Suskafoo. Get me out of here.

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD – SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE

The *Refugee-One* leaves the hangar bay and speeds into the asteroid field.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD – SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the slowly spinning asteroid base.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – HANGAR BAY

A Verpine Servitor is communicating with Pollard at the mouth of the bay, pointing out into the Roche Asteroid Field. Hulda, Endigo, and Skatuhl enter, blasters out.

Pollard nods to the Servitor and then moves to an instrument panel. Endigo is suddenly in front of him.

ENDIGO
What happened?

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – COMMAND CENTER

Rebel and Verpine Engineers move about the command center, frantically collecting holo-disks from terminals and pushing filed datapads out of the chamber on carts. Commander Ackbar is showing Bre and Two-Tau the two asteroids of Project Shantipole on the holoprojector.

BRE
Wait.
(pointing to one)
This is us. And this--
(pointing to the other)
--is where you're keeping the B-Wings?

ACKBAR
Cumbersome, I agree, but Roche offers limited space. The other asteroid is the Research Station, where all of our designs turn into the actual working models.

An ALERT SOUNDS just before the Command Base is BOMBARDED from outside. The lights in the Command Center FLICKER ominously.

A nearby Verpine SCREECHES and drops a pile of holo-disks, scrambling from the chamber. Bre moves to pick them up as the communications loudspeaker CRACKLES to life.

POLLARD (V.O.)
Imperial Assault Shuttles are closing fast. Emergency evacuation! All personnel immediately report to the lifeboat bay. This is no drill!

Another EXPLOSION outside SHUDDERS the Command Base. Ackbar speaks into a console.

ACKBAR
We must hold out against an attack, Lieutenant. If I don't retrieve the two-man B-Wing configuration files from this computer, then everything we've worked for will be lost. I need time!

POLLARD (V.O.)
Hangar’s gone, Commander. We’re losing atmosphere.

ACKBAR
All soldiers fall back to the main power generators. Seal the blast doors, Pollard.

Pollard enters with Endigo, Hulda, and Skatuhl.

POLLARD
Done. Glek took Suskafoo, Snekkit, Vektaul, and Skice.

ACKBAR
Go to the hive quarters, Lieutenant. Get their drones.

BRE
Where’s Nuni?

ENDIGO
Two-Tau, you don’t breathe. You know what to do.

Two-Tau strides from the chamber with a purpose.

TWO-TAU
Boka me too ta!

EXT. SPACE – NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

The *Refugee-One* clears the asteroid field, passing a string of Imperial Assault Shuttles headed for Shantipole. The Nebulon-B *Grenadier* waits for the Townowi vessel to dock.

INT. NEBULON-B FRIGATE *GRENADIER* – BRIDGE

District Commander Nothos is at his vidscreen kiosk, speaking to Salin Glek.

Behind the Quarren, the four Verpine are navigating the *Refugee-One* towards the frigate.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
We've already penetrated the Research Station. Your layout schematics have made it an easy win, Agent Glek.

GLEK
Nothos, I suspect that Ackbar has contingency measures prepared for the station. Tell our troopers to be careful. Send a scanning team soon.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
Capturing the Command Base will be just as well. If cannot get our hands on the prototypes, then we will at least--

GLEK
Shen Endigo's people are protecting that one, sir.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
That's why I sent an army.

INT. *REFUGEE-ONE* – BRIDGE

Salin Glek nods up at the monitor, tentacles trembling.

GLEK
And a third plan, if all else fails. I have Ackbar's chief designer here with me. Verpine are easy to break.

The Quarren gestures to the Verpine without looking. He doesn't see that the color has drained from their bodies. Suskafoo and its companions are now white Verpine drones.

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD – SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE

ZOOMING SHOT: An Imperial Assault Shuttle has extended a plastisteel landing tube into the Command Base's demolished hangar bay. Small figures are rushing through into the base: Imperial Stormtroopers. Waves of them.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – MAIN POWER GENERATOR

Twenty Rebel Soldiers have gathered in this tall, rocky chamber. Four-meter supports hold a series of catwalks up, which surround the HUMMING energy pylons. Hulda and Boj rush in from a hollowed-out corridor. All the Rebel Soldiers have their blasters trained on the massive blast doors on the opposing wall. Hulda pulls up a diagram of the Command Base on a vidscreen. RED BLIPS are swarming out of the hangar and into the compound.

A Rebel Soldier glances down nervously at the vidscreen.

HULDA CAULP
I wouldn’t look down here.

BOJ
(to Hulda)
They’re separating into fire teams.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – CORRIDOR A

A squadron of stormtroopers moves slowly down the corridor. They cover each other with each advance.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – CORRIDOR B

Rebel Soldiers are hiding behind cargo crates and in niches in the corridor’s walls. LASERFIRE IS HEARD nearby.

Dacon Jix moves past the Rebel Soldiers, carrying a laser cannon tripod in his arms. Rebel Soldier One gapes at the gigantic furry Whiphid running by.

REBEL SOLDIER ONE
What the hell is that?

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – HANGAR BAY

Stormtroopers are coming endlessly out of the landing tubes into the wreckage of the hangar bay. A WHINING SOUND IS HEARD as Two-Tau opens fire from above.

The Combat Droid is standing upside down on the bottom of the control tower, his feet magnetically sealed to the structure's underbelly, his handcannons RAINING FIRE. EXPLOSIONS rack the already damaged floor, scattering blackened husks of stormtroopers across it. Some are flung out of the bay and into the void. Two-Tau then aims for the plastisteel landing tube and shreds it. Stormtroopers inside begin to stop, crowding up near the tearing opening. More handcannon fire breaks the tube and sends it whipping into space, throwing stormtroopers into the vacuum.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – MAIN POWER GENERATOR

The blast doors DETONATE inward, a DEAFENING SOUND. They crush a few Rebel Soldiers who are too close to the front. The gleaming white armor of Imperial Stormtroopers emerges from the rising clouds of smoke and fire. Blaster bolts EXPLODE near Hulda's head, SHATTERING the vidscreen and covering him with blistering SPARKS. Hulda falls down, SCREAMING. The stormtroopers charge.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – HIVE QUARTERS

Pollard and Endigo push their way through SCREECHING Verpine in a honeycombed section of the Command Base. An EXPLOSION erupts nearby. Pollard points out a white drone on the floor. The drone is twitching violently.

ENDIGO
How can you tell?

POLLARD
Friend of mine.

Pollard gently lifts up the drone to a sitting position. He strokes its antennae as a pale green color begins to overtake its carapace.

POLLARD
It's okay, Suskafoo, come on back. We gotta go soon.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – COMMAND CENTER

Bre pops a thermal charge off her ammo belt as Ackbar pulls several disks out of a BLINKING terminal. He nods to her and moves to a nearby blast door. She tosses the charge into the holoprojector tank.

BRE

Five.

They exit through the blast door. A stormtrooper enters the Command Center four seconds later and hears a PING.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE – CORRIDOR B

Jix holds the laser cannon on his shoulder, spraying laserfire down the corridor, drilling stormtroopers into a pile. Then a blaster bolt hits Jix in the chest and he falls to one knee, still firing. Another catches him in the arm. The Whiphid hits the ground, GRUNTING and MOANING. The stormtroopers advance on the remaining two Rebel Soldiers.

Boj, holding Hulda up, appears behind the Imperials and opens fire. Hulda, barely conscious, lifts his blaster to fire as well.

A few stormtroopers fall in the crossfire, but one turns around and BLASTS Boj in the neck. The Gotal falls, Hulda tumbling down with him. Suddenly, all of the stormtroopers are riddled by laser cannon fire.

Rebel Soldier One has propped Jix’s arm up, guiding the Whiphid’s aim. Jix GRUNTS a thank you.

Hulda crawls over to Boj, but then flips him over, not wanting to look. Rebel Soldier Two helps Hulda to his feet and they stagger back down the corridor. Ackbar’s voice comes over the loudspeakers.

ACKBAR (V.O.)

We are secure to leave. All Rebel forces get to the lifeboat bay immediately. Imperial fighters will break through the automated defense turrets soon!

Jix GRUNTS at Hulda a few times. Hulda nods and then motions for Rebel Soldier One to follow.

REBEL SOLDIER ONE
You're leaving him..?

HULDA CAULP
Jix is just shaking it off. Let's go.
(into his wrist radio)
Shen?

The sound of blaster fire comes over Hulda's radio.

ENDIGO (V.O.)
Not now.

HULDA CAULP
Gotcha.

INT. SHANTIPOLE COMMAND BASE - LIFEBOAT BAY

Fifteen pod-shaped intrusions are recessed into the inside of the asteroid's outer crust. Only three lifeboats remain, leaving a dozen gaping holes that look out into the Roche Asteroid Field, sealed by faintly GLIMMERING atmosfields. Ackbar and several of his Engineers, human and Verpine, are climbing into one of the lifeboats. Pollard enters with Suskafoo and three other half-alive Verpine. Bre, Skatuhl, and Ube Tonnit are disassembling Two-Tau, tossing his pieces into the second lifeboat.

ACKBAR
Pollard, we can squeeze a few more in here.

POLLARD
I'll wait for Endigo, Commander. He was right behind me.

BRE
Where's Nuni?

Rebel Soldiers One and Two enter, propping Hulda up on his feet. Ackbar motions for them to enter his lifeboat. An EXPLOSION erupts again somewhere in the near distance.

HULDA CAULP
Hey, Chori.

Bre rushes over and hugs him, cradling Two-Tau's head in one arm. She's starting to cry. Hulda kisses her on the cheek and gets inside Ackbar's lifeboat. It launches with a LOUD WHOOSH. Bre puts Two-Tau's head into the second lifeboat carefully. Endigo enters, busted up and bleeding. His cybernetic eye is cracked and SPARKING intermittently.

POLLARD
Shen! What happened?

ENDIGO
Guess.

Suskafoo wobbles over to Bre, CHIRPING. Pollard helps the other Verpine into the second lifeboat.

BRE
Wrong way, uh, Suskawhat.

SUSKAFOO
Purple unit is dead I am trying to say.

ENDIGO
Damn it.

Bre slowly shakes her head, crying terribly now. Suskafoo cocks its head at her, waving an antenna. She pushes the Verpine away and goes over to Endigo.

ENDIGO
Go on, kid. You and Tonnit get out of here. I've got to wait for Jix. Wait. Hulda make it?
(closes his eyes for a moment)
Never mind. Hulda's fine.

POLLARD
More stormtroopers are coming, Skip. You can hear them, too.

ENDIGO
Leave that last one, then.
(into his transceiver ear)
Jix?

Tonnit and Skatuhl force Bre into Pollard's lifeboat. Suskafoo follows.

BRE
Come on, Shen! He's not there!

Endigo moves to the Lifeboat Bay doorway and IGNITES his lightsaber. Bre struggles to get out of the lifeboat.

BRE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?!

ENDIGO
I'm standing here with my lightsaber and looking scary. Go.

Bre is pulled inside. Pollard shuts the hatch on the lifeboat and it LAUNCHES. Endigo waits.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
(over Endigo's transceiver)
Shen, you still busy?

ENDIGO
I'm at the Base. Jix hasn't shown yet.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Tried to tell you before. Jix is dead.

ENDIGO
Fine. I'll go... I'll go get the tusks.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

More Imperial capital ships have joined the *Grenadier*.

TIE patrols are leaving Heavy Cruisers, Dreadnaughts, and an *Imperial*-class Star Destroyer and heading into the asteroid field as the capital ships begin to spread out.

The *Refugee-One* is docked to the underside of the Nebulon-B Frigate, between the large forward bridge sections and the aft engines.

INT. NEBULON-B FRIGATE *GRENADIER* - BRIDGE

Salin Glek strides into the bridge, coming to meet with District Commander Nothos. He salutes.

SALIN GLEK
I have lost Ackbar's Engineer team.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
How?

SALIN GLEK
A trick of biology. All that's left are dried husks.

Nothos has no idea what the Quarren is talking about, but he waves it off and nods approvingly at the widening Imperial Blockade.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
It doesn't matter. We have the prototypes. Our engineers are still trying to figure out how they function. And the scanner team you suggested turned up nothing. Research Station Shantipole is secure. All we have to do now is find Ackbar and his design team.

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

A strange scarab-shaped Verpine Transport hides behind a large asteroid. Its midsection is lined with small bays. The Shantipole lifeboats are docked there.

INT. VERPINE TRANSPORT – COMMUNAL CHAMBER

Ackbar and his team have gathered with several new Verpine in a large organic looking chamber within the transport. One side is decorated with iris-like holoprojector screens. Bre, Hulda, Skatuhl, Ube Tonnit, Two-Tau, Pollard, Suskafoo, Snekkit, Vektaul, Skice, and Rebel Soldiers One and Two are led toward that section by a Verpine Servitor. White drones scuttle about everywhere.

An aging Verpine sits on a command chair in front of the holoprojector array, SPEAKER JURFEL, its carapace flaking and cracked.

ACKBAR
It is good to see you again, Speaker Jurfel.

SPEAKER JURFEL
Danger threatens the hive. An hour ago, the Empire broadcast a subspace message on all frequencies, ordering the Verpine to submit or die.

Bre is jittery. She tugs on Hulda’s sleeve.

BRE
Well?

HULDA CAULP
Shen’s coming. Jix didn’t make it.

REBEL SOLDIER ONE
But... he, he said he was just ‘shaking it off’.

HULDA CAULP
That’s just what I told you.

BRE
So why did Shen stay so long at the Command Base?

HULDA CAULP
I’ll explain later. Now be quiet.

A holoprojector shows the Imperial occupation of Research Station Shantipole, a larger asteroid with RED BLIPS moving all around it. Other holoprojectors show TIE patrols and Assault Shuttles.

SPEAKER JURFEL
... the hive has rejected the Empire's ultimatum and has decided to merge with your Alliance. The situation is grim, however. Our research station has been captured. TIE patrols are sweeping the area in regular patterns. We are massing our own fleet in an attempt to escape.

ACKBAR
(lifting a datapad)
This will not end until they find the computer files I have stored within this datapad and all members of the Alliance engineering team. And, Speaker Jurfel, your fleet... it is unarmed.

BRE
What?!

SPEAKER JURFEL
The hive is a peaceful one, Rebel unit. We do not build war.

BRE
Except for B-Wing Bombers, huh?

Endigo enters.

ENDIGO
No, Bre, that was High Command's idea. They got the Verpine into the same trouble we're in.
(motioning to Ackbar)
The bugs just make ships. This guy sticks all the weapons on them.

Endigo throws Jix's tusks to Hulda, who puts them sadly into his belt bag. The Mon Calamari looks at Endigo for a span, hangs his head, and finally SIGHS.

ENDIGO (CONT'D)
Let's just save all that guilt for later, Commander. Now, how do we get out of this?

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

A wing of TIE Fighters moves nimbly through the slowly stumbling asteroids of the Roche field. A cluster of small rocks floats INTO VIEW in the foreground. An Imperial Probe Droid guides itself through them, finally clamping onto one with its many spindly legs. Its head spins around once, sensor array exposed, before launching off again to search another area.

INT. VERPINE TRANSPORT – STAGING AREA

Ackbar, Pollard, Endigo, Hulda, Bre, and Suskafoo are in another oddly constructed section of the Verpine Scarab ship. They are scanning the Imperial patrol patterns on a rippling, liquid-like vidscreen.

SUSKAFOO
My analysis shows a flaw in the blockade. Here, at this point, is the weak link. Sector G147, where the asteroid trajectories form a natural corridor through the field.

ACKBAR
Only a single Nebulon-B escort frigate. An armed vessel could provide cover fire distraction that would allow us to move the Verpine fleet out of the field and into open space, before the rest of the blockade could respond.

ENDIGO
And where do we get one of those?

POLLARD
The only combat-ready craft in the immediate vicinity is my freighter. Unfortunately, it's at the Research Station.

The vidscreen changes to show Research Station Shantipole.

ACKBAR
A small strike team could sneak into the Research Station, recover your transport, and eliminate any remaining evidence of our secret project.

POLLARD
Surely Glek's found our contingency plan by now.

BRE
What's that?

SUSKAFOO
To blow up the station in a very big way. He hasn't discovered it, friend Pollard. Verpine designed the detonation system. Very invisible. Glek detests Verpine. He pays no attention to what we do except to take credit.

POLLARD
Commander, the prototypes will be destroyed as well.

SUSKAFOO
The hive will build more.

ENDIGO
Okay. Pollard, me, and the bug will get inside Shantipole. When it explodes, that's your signal to move the fleet to the clear corridor. Pollard, your freighter still the same monster she always was?

POLLARD
Better.

ACKBAR
You <u>have</u> to recapture your ship, Lieutenant. Without it, the Verpine fleet will be easy targets for that Nebulon-B.

Ackbar looks at the image of Shantipole, shaking his head.

ACKBAR (CONT'D)
I still cannot believe that Lieutenant Glek betrayed us. He was with the project since the beginning.

POLLARD
This isn't the first time Alliance operations have been infiltrated by the Emperor's agents, Commander. We're still learning how to fight this war.

INT. VERPINE TRANSPORT – HANGAR BAY

Small Verpine scout ships (Hoppers) are spaced in a honeycomb-shaped docking array. A Servitor guides one of the lower Hoppers out. It settles to the bay floor. Endigo, Pollard, and Suskafoo start to get in when Bre enters.

BRE
I go, too.

ENDIGO
Come on, kid, we don't--

BRE
Look at yourself. Pieces are falling off, see? I go, too. And quit calling Suskafoo a bug.

SUSKAFOO
Yes. I would like that.

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD – RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE

The Research Station is so large as to be a moonlet. Vents and hangars light its surface, and the glowing dome of a hothouse agrifactory bubbles out from the top. TIEs fly in formation around the station, but no Assault Shuttles are in sight. The Verpine Hopper zips from behind one chunk of rock to another, moving like a hornet: up, down, to the side, stopping so quickly that it seems like it's defying the laws of physics.

INT. VERPINE HOPPER - COCKPIT

Suskafoo sits at the controls, his appendages reaching into a variety of different recessed steering controls. Bre and Endigo look nauseated, but Pollard is fine.

ENDIGO
I'm getting sick.

Beyond the Hopper's cockpit, Research Station Shantipole stands waiting.

SUSKAFOO
Inertial dampeners, you bet.

ENDIGO
Should've known.

Pollard points to a hangar bay on the asteroid. It looks completely destroyed.

POLLARD
Suskafoo, take the Hopper into--

SUSKAFOO
I see it. Bay eight. Sensors indicate all power is cut off in that section except for auxiliary life support.

POLLARD
Looks like it took a pounding during the takeover. We'll have a few minutes before they detect us.

BRE
So what're we waiting for?

SUSKAFOO
Empire fighters. Eighteen seconds before they pass again. Seventeen.

INT. RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE - HANGAR BAY EIGHT

The Hopper shoots into the wreckage of the bay like lightning, coming to a complete stop as soon as it's inside. The cockpit opens and everyone jumps out. Endigo takes a second to keep his stomach down.

SUSKAFOO
I will go and begin the really big explosion.

Suskafoo scuttles off, while Pollard and Bre run into a different corridor. Endigo finally moves to follow them.

INT. RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE – ENGINEERING SECTION

Imperial Technicians are trying to figure out the Verpine/ Alliance computer terminal configurations. Verpine drones stand lifeless all around them. Suskafoo enters.

IMPERIAL TECHNICIAN
No unauthorized personnel.

SUSKAFOO
I have been sent by Salin Glek. He wants me to fix my fellow hive members.

IMPERIAL TECHNICIAN
Uh, okay. What, did they shut down or something?

SUSKAFOO
This is a Verpine transitional fear stage. I must share minds with them. I will be no bother.

The Imperial Technician shrugs and gets back to work.

INT. RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE – CORRIDOR

Two Imperial Stormtroopers march down a tight, rocky passage lined with doorways. As they pass by one, Bre looks out, waits a second, and then tosses a thermal charge down the corridor. The stormtroopers look to the ground, see it, and start to run down the corridor as fast as they can.

Endigo’s arm comes out of a doorway in front of the stormtroopers just as they pass, his lightsaber ignited and level with their necks.

ON BRE, who winces as she hears the VORPING SOUND, the THUDS of their bodies, and the two CLATTERING sounds that hit the ground a second later. She goes and recovers the inactive thermal charge from the ground.

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

The Verpine fleet is gathering, varying in shape and size along the same scarab theme as the Verpine Transport.

INT. VERPINE TRANSPORT – COMMUNAL CHAMBER

Speaker Jurfel and Ackbar are relaying the plans for the fleet's escape over the holoprojector array. Hulda enters.

HULDA CAULP
Commander? There's a problem.

INT. RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE – CONTROL STATION

Endigo, Bre, and Pollard are hiding in a control station overlooking another ruined hangar. The two B-Wing prototypes are hanging from the ceiling, catwalks extended to them and guarded by stormtroopers. On the bomb blasted floor of the hangar is the debris of Pollard's freighter. Endigo talks into his transceiver.

ENDIGO
Pollard's freighter is a bust. I think we could take the B-Wings, though.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
Hold on.

POLLARD
They're <u>prototypes</u>, Shen. We don't really even know if their weapons systems are reliable yet.

HULDA CAULP (V.O.)
What he said. But Ackbar and the Verpine want to take the risk anyway. The fleet still moves on your signal.

INT. RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE – ENGINEERING SECTION

Suskafoo stands before a drone and cocks its head. The Imperial Technicians continue their investigations of the Shantipole computer terminals.

SUSKAFOO
These units are more afraid than I had imagined. I must go and get more pheromones.

The Verpine moves to exit, but then stops behind an Imperial Technician. Suskafoo types something into the terminal before him. The computer comes to life.

SUSKAFOO (CONT'D)
That should help you.

INT. RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE – CONTROL STATION

A light starts to BLINK on Pollard's cybernetic arm.

POLLARD
Station's set to blow in ten, Skip.

ENDIGO
Then 'Suskafoo' better hurry. Bre, come on.

INT. RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE – HANGAR BAY ONE

Bre and Endigo rush out of the control station onto the starfighter catwalks. Bre BLASTS two of the stormtroopers before they can react. She ducks the return fire of another pair as Endigo leaps across his catwalk to theirs.

Before he lands, Endigo BLASTS the first stormtrooper and ignites his lightsaber. He swings at dead air when he lands because Bre has already BLASTED the second. Endigo turns back to her and smiles.

Pollard and Suskafoo rush out of the control station.

POLLARD
We know how to fly these things. Suskafoo, go with Bre. I'll take the other one with Shen.

SUSKAFOO
You will have to fire the weapons, Rebel unit. I cannot create war.

BRE
Let's just hope these things work.

They enter the B-Wings and fire them up.

EXT. ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD – ON RESEARCH STATION SHANTIPOLE

as MULTIPLE EXPLOSIONS rupture it apart. The B-Wings zoom out of an EXPANDING WHITE OUT.

EXT. SPACE – NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

The Verpine fleet is already out of the field and engaged in a one-sided battle with the Nebulon-B *Grenadier*. The frigate, some distance away, fires on one of the smaller Scarabs. The transport EXPLODES.

INT. B-WING PROTOTYPE A - COCKPIT

Pollard punches it, zooming over the Verpine transports. District Commander Nothos comes over the comm console.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS (V.O.)
I am District Commander Bane Nothos, and my flagship will take great pleasure destroying your fleet one transport at a time until Ackbar and his project team surrender.

The *Grenadier* fires and another Verpine transport EXPLODES.

INT. VERPINE TRANSPORT – COMMUNAL CHAMBER

Speaker Jurfel, Ackbar, and Hulda watch the destruction.

ACKBAR
Pollard, we desperately need your help.

INT. B-WING PROTOTYPE A - COCKPIT

Endigo presses the weapons buttons again and again. They do nothing. He looks over to Pollard and lifts his hands.

POLLARD
Commander, fire control on B-Wing A is not responding! Repeat--

INT. B-WING PROTOTYPE B - COCKPIT

ON BRE, pounding on the B-Wing's dash.

POLLARD (V.O.)
--fire control is not responding!

BRE
Ours neither!
(turning)
Suskafoo..!

PULL BACK to see the white form of a Verpine drone beside her. Outside, another transport EXPLODES.

EXT. SPACE – NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

The B-Wing prototypes fly helplessly around the *Grenadier* as the Verpine fleet scatters through the fiery remains of blasted transports.

ZOOM TO the *Refugee-One*, still docked with the Nebulon-B.

INT. *REFUGEE-ONE* - BRIDGE

Suskafoo's body stops twitching and awakens in a flight chair. The Verpine looks around one last time at the Townowi vessel's interior and then begins to tap out a sequence on the command console.

SUSKAFOO
Yes, well, I suppose that would cause a thermoblast. Forget I ever suggested it.

INT. NEBULON-B FRIGATE *GRENADIER* – BRIDGE

Glek and Nothos watch as another transport EXPLODES. The District Commander's face has almost become sympathetic.

DISTRICT COMMANDER NOTHOS
I... cannot believe they continue to engage us.

EXT. SPACE – NEAR ROCHE ASTEROID FIELD

The *Refugee-One* EXPLODES, breaking the *Grenadier* in half. The fore and aft sections of the frigate falls away, each in a perpetual spin. The Verpine fleet surges forward, each transport entering hyperspace as soon as it is clear.

INT. B-WING PROTOTYPE B - COCKPIT

The white Verpine drone slumps forward, dead. Bre's eyes are wet as she reaches over and keys into the B-Wing's hyperdrive. The stars outside the cockpit streak by, hot bright strands.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE – POTHOR SYSTEM

Alliance starships are mingled with the remnants of the Verpine fleet. The Star Destroyer *Atonement* is nearby.

INT. STAR DESTROYER *ATONEMENT* – BRIDGE

Mede, Destri, and Bre are talking to the holographic image of Mon Mothma, General Madine, and Admiral Ackbar.

MON MOTHMA
Admiral Mede, we are forever indebted to your crew. Their bravery has saved the Alliance.

MEDE
Your gratitude should be directed to Officer Bre here, Madame Chairwoman. And to Shen Endigo, leader of the Shantipole strike force.

MON MOTHMA
Yes, it should. Where is Mr. Endigo?

DESTRI
He is currently in Med Lab, recovering from his injuries.

MEDE
He left a message for High Command, though. Officer Bre?

BRE
Permission to speak freely, Madame Chairwoman.

MON MOTHMA
Of course.

BRE
Endigo said go to hell.

INT. STAR DESTROYER *ATONEMENT* – MESS HALL

Rebel Officers and *Long Haulers* sit at long tables, taking their meals. UCA JIX and GORR JIX are too large for the seats, so they sit on a table, picking food out of a tray between them. Hulda enters and approaches the Whiphids, taking Dacon Jix's tusks out of his belt bag.

HULDA CAULP
Your brother, he was a firebrand out there. He said you guys would never have a day half so glorious.

Uca Jix GRUNTS a small laugh and takes one of his brother's tusks, sliding it under an armband that already holds several others. Hulda gives the second tusk to Gorr and exits. The Whiphids go back to eating.

INT. STAR DESTROYER *ATONMENT* – MED LAB

Endigo's cybernetic eye is under the drill of a medical droid. He sustains the procedure stoically. Mede enters.

MEDE
Mr. Endigo. I came to apologize.

ENDIGO
It wasn't your fault.

MEDE
I know that. I was apologizing on behalf of High Command.

ENDIGO
They knew the Empire had a plant on the inside.

MEDE
And you were right, there after the briefing. However you did it.
(beat)
Mr. Endigo, they were my people, too.

ENDIGO
Then with all due respect, sir, listen to me next time.

INT. STAR DESTROYER *ATONEMENT* –BRIDGE

Captain Destri is overseeing the Alliance supply tugs outside as they refuel and rearm the *Atonement*. Bre is standing in the same space she was before, though the holograms are gone. She is trembling.

Destri puts her hand on Bre's shoulder and whispers something. Bre turns around and hugs the Captain, closing her eyes and not letting go.

She is still learning how to fight this war.

IRIS OUT.

THE END